

Martin O'Malley, *Governor* |
Anthony G. Brown, *Lt. Governor* |



| Beverley K. Swaim-Staley, *Secretary*
| Melinda B. Peters, *Administrator*

July 10, 2012

Ms. Patricia Baptiste
Chair
Chevy Chase Village
5906 Connecticut Avenue
Chevy Chase MD 20815

Dear Ms. Baptiste:

Thank you for your letter regarding pedestrian safety at the MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) and Lennox Street intersection in Montgomery County. This is a follow-up to the April 17th letter that you received.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) follows federal and state rules under the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) as a guideline for when and where traffic control devices should be installed. These guidelines are nationwide in scope and promulgated by the Federal Highway Administration for reasons of consistency and safety.

Pursuant to the request by the Chevy Chase Village for a pedestrian activated traffic signal to cross MD 185, a thirteen-hour turning movement count was collected along MD 185 at its intersections with Melrose Street, Lennox Street, Kirke Street, Irving Street, and Chevy Chase Circle. The traffic volume count also included all pedestrians crossing MD 185 at these intersections or at any given point mid-block between these intersections. Ridership volumes for the bus stops located at East/West Lennox Street, Irving Street, Oxford Street, and Quincy Street were collected from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and taken into consideration for the analysis.

When performing a signal warrant analysis, SHA utilizes traffic volume counts that best depict a typical daily volume scenario, understanding Chevy Chase Village sometimes holds special events that may prompt additional pedestrian use of MD 185. Field observations revealed that some elderly pedestrians crossed MD 185 and most motorists travelled at the posted speed limit. Scenarios outside of the typical methodologies noted in the MUTCD were considered to

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determine if a pedestrian-activated signal was warranted. In order to account for the elderly population utilizing MD 185, the criterion for pedestrian volumes crossing the major street was reduced by as much as 50 percent for the signal warrant analysis. In addition, a summation of the pedestrian volumes from each of the aforementioned intersections were utilized in the warrant analysis as a single combined factor to determine if a pedestrian-activated signal is warranted. Although more generous scenarios were used in the analysis, the volumes remained too low to meet warrants.

Sight distance along MD 185 was also reviewed to determine whether adequate sight distance is available for pedestrians to cross MD 185 safely. Considering the prevailing speeds of vehicle traveling along MD 185, SHA found that the sight distance is adequate for pedestrians to judge gaps in traffic and safely cross MD 185. A review of the most recent three-year police-reported crash history within the study limits did not reveal a pattern of pedestrian crashes correctable by installing a pedestrian-activated traffic signal. As a result of the aforementioned findings, a pedestrian-activated signal is not recommended at this time. In fact, installation of an unwarranted traffic signal may lead to excessive delay in the already-congested MD 185 corridor, increased cut-through traffic as motorists attempt to avoid the signal, increases in rear-end collisions, and increases in crash severity.

In lieu of the pedestrian-activated signal, SHA explored other measures to address the concerns expressed by Chevy Chase Village. To raise driver awareness, a new flashing warning beacon reading "Pedestrian Ahead Stay Alert 30MPH" will be installed on southbound MD 185 just south of MD 191 and the existing flashing warning beacon along northbound MD 185 will be relocated closer to the DC line with a modified message that reads "Pedestrians Ahead Stay Alert 30MPH". These modifications, coupled with the existing overhead hazard identification beacon (HIB) along southbound MD 185 approaching Aspen Street just over a half mile north of the study limit that alerts motorists of the 30MPH speed limit and of pedestrians ahead, the automated speed enforcement device, the pedestrian warning signs, and the existing marked crossings within the study limit, will likely contribute to enhanced pedestrian safety.

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As you may know, representatives from SHA's District 3 office met with members of the Chevy Chase Village Community on May 16, 2012 to discuss the findings of the study. The requested listing of state-maintained signals within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties along with a copy of the study findings are forthcoming. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 301-513-7311, toll free 1-800-749-0737 or via email at byoung@sha.state.md.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Young', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian W. Young
District Engineer